
THE
M A N U A L
AND
PLATOON EXERCISES.

Great Britain and Ireland

Army
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THE



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AND

PLATOON EXERCISES

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By His Majesty's Command.

*Adjutant General's Office,
April 20, 1792.*

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By His Majesty's Command

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AND

PLATON EXHIBITS

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INTRODUCTION.

HIS Majesty having thought proper, to take into His Royal Consideration, the modes in which, the *Manual* and *Platoon Exercises* are at present performed by His Troops;—and it appearing to His Majesty, that some alterations might be made in both, which would be productive of great utility, and advantage to His Service;—particularly, by reducing the unnecessary length of the former;—His Majesty is therefore pleased, hereby to recall, and cancel His former Regulations, respecting the *Manual* and *Platoon Exercises*, and to order that, in their stead, the following shall be adopted, and invariably practised in future, by His whole Army.

BY HIS MAJESTY'S COMMAND.

WILLIAM FAWCETT,
ADJUTANT GENERAL.

*Adjutant General's Office,
April 20, 1792.*

INTRODUCTION

His Majesty having thought proper to take into His Royal Consideration, the modes in which the Army and Fleet were at present governed by His Majesty, and it appearing to His Majesty that some alterations might be made in both, which would be productive of great utility and advantage to His Majesty's service;—particularly, by reducing the unnecessary length of the list of officers;—His Majesty is therefore pleased, hereby to recall, and cancel the former regulations, respecting the Army and Fleet respectively, and to order that in their stead, the following shall be adopted, and immediately published in pursuance of His Majesty's command.

BY HIS MAJESTY'S COMMAND

WILLIAM PITT, ESQ.
ADJUTANT-GENERAL.

THE MANUAL, AND PLATOON EXERCISE.

Position of the Soldier under Arms.

THE equal squareness of the shoulders, and body, to the front, is the first, and great principle of the position of the soldier :—The heels must be in a line, and closed :—The knees straight, without stiffness :—The toes turned out, so that the feet may form an angle of about 60 degrees :—The arms hang near the body, but not stiff ; the flat of the hand, and little finger, touching the thigh, and the thumbs as far back as the seams of the breeches :—The elbows and shoulders are to be kept back :—

The belly rather drawn in; and the breast advanced, but without constraint:—The body to be upright, but inclining rather forwards, so that the weight of it may bear chiefly on the fore part of the feet:—The head to be erect; and neither turned to the right, nor to the left; the eyes alone will be glanced to the right.

The body of the soldier being in this position, the firelock is to be placed in his left hand, against the shoulder; his wrist to be a little turned out; the thumb alone to appear in front; the four fingers to be under the butt; and the left elbow to be rather bent inwards, so as not to be separated from the body, or to be more backward or forward than the right one:—The firelock must rest full on the hand, not on the end of the fingers; and be carried in such manner, as not to raise, advance, or keep back one shoulder more than the other; the butt must therefore be forward, and as low as can be permitted without constraint; the fore part a very little before the front of the thigh; and the hind part of it pressed by the wrist against the thigh:—It must be kept steady, and firm, before the hollow of the shoulder; should it be drawn back

or carried too high, the one shoulder would be advanced, the other kept back, and the upper part of the body would be distorted, and not square with respect to the limbs.

MANUAL EXERCISE.

EXPLANATION.

Words of
command.

Bring the firelock to the trail in 2 motions as usual, seizing it at the 1st *1st. Order* at the lower loop, just above the swell; *arms.* at the 2d, bring it down to the right *3. Motions.* side, the butt within two inches of the ground; at the 3d, drop the butt on the ground, placing the muzzle against the hollow of the right shoulder, and the hand flat upon the sling.

At the word, *fix*, place the thumb of *2d. Fix* the right hand, as quick as possible, *bayonets.* behind the barrel, taking a gripe of the firelock; as soon as the word of command is fully out, push the firelock a
*B 4 little

little forward, at the same time drawing out the bayonet with the left hand, and fixing it with the utmost celerity:—The instant this is done, return, as quick as possible, to the *order*, as above described, and stand perfectly steady.

3d. *Shoulder arms.* As soon as the word *shoulder* is given, take a gripe of the firelock with the right hand, as in fixing bayonets, and at the last word, *arms*, the firelock must be thrown with the right hand in one motion, and with as little appearance of effort, as possible, into its proper position on the left shoulder;—the hand crosses the body in so doing, but must instantly be withdrawn.

4th. *Present arms.* 1st. Seize the firelock with the right hand, under the guard, turning the lock to the front, but without moving it from the shoulder.

2d. Bring it to the *poize*, seizing it with the left hand, the fingers extended along the sling, the wrist upon the guard, and the point of the left thumb of equal height with the eyes.

3d. Bring down the firelock with a quick motion, as low as the right hand will admit without constraint, drawing back the right foot at the same instant, so that the hollow of it may touch the left heel.—The firelock
in

in this position is to be totally supported in the left hand;—the body to rest entirely on the left foot;—both knees to be straight.

1st. By a turn of the right wrist, bring the firelock to its proper position on the shoulder as described above, the left hand grasping the butt:—2d. Quit the right hand, bringing it briskly down to its place by the side.

5th. *Shoulder arms.*

2 *Motions.*

1st. At one motion throw the firelock from the shoulder across the body, to a low diagonal recover, a position known in many regiments by the name of *porting arms*, or *preparing for the charge*, in which the lock is to be turned to the front, and at the height of the breast; the muzzle slanting upwards, so that the barrel may cross opposite the point of the left shoulder, with the butt proportionally depressed: the right hand grasps the small of the butt, and the left holds the piece at the swell, close to the lower pipe, the thumbs of both hands pointing towards the muzzle.

6th. *Charge bayonets.*

2 *Motions.*

2d. Make a half face to the right, and bring down the firelock to nearly a horizontal position, with the muzzle inclining a little upwards, and the right wrist resting against the hollow of the thigh, just below the hip.

N. B.

N. B. The first motion of the *charge* is the position which the soldier will, either from the shoulder, or after firing, take, in order to advance on an enemy, whom it is intended to attack with fixed bayonets; and the word of command for that purpose is, "*prepare to charge.*" The second position of the charge is that which the front rank takes, when arrived at a few yards distance only from the body to be attacked. The first motion of the *charge* is also that which sentries are to take, when challenging any persons who approach their posts.

7th. Shoulder arms.

2 Motions.

I. Face to the front, and throw up the piece into its position on the shoulder, by a turn of the right wrist, instantly grasping the butt, as above described, with the left hand.

II. Quit the firelock briskly with the right hand, bringing it to its proper place by the side.

The men must be taught likewise to *support arms* at *three* motions, throwing the first and second nearly into one: at the first motion, they seize the small of the butt under the lock with the right hand, bringing the butt in front of the groin, and keeping the lock somewhat turned out: at the second they bring the left arm

arm under the cock: at the third they quit the right hand. In *carrying arms* from the *support*, the motions are exactly reversed.

In marching any distance, or in standing at ease, when *supported*, the men are allowed to bring their right hand across the body, to the small of the butt, which latter must, in that case, be thrown still more forward; the fingers of the left hand being uppermost, must be placed between the body, and the right elbow: the right hands are to be instantly removed; when the division *halts*, or is ordered to *dress by the right*.

The motions in the manual exercise will, in future, be performed slower than heretofore, leaving three seconds between each motion, except that of *fixing bayonets*, in which a longer time must be given.

Time.

The manual is not to be executed by one word, or signal, but each separate word of command is to be given by the officer who commands the body performing it.

In regard to the motions of *securing*, *grounding*, and *trailing*, as well as those of *piling*, &c. it will be sufficient for the soldiers to be taught to perform them in the most convenient, and quickest method.

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thod. *Returning bayonets* is to be done from the *order*, in the same manner as *fixing* them.

The *manual*, and *platoon exercise*, will no longer make a regular part of a review, but will only be gone through, when particularly called for by the reviewing General.

The *platoon exercise* is always to be done with ranks closed, except at the drill.

Sentries. Sentries posted with shouldered arms, are permitted afterwards to *support*, but not to *slope* them.—On the approach of an officer, they immediately *carry* their arms; and put themselves into their proper position, which is not to be done at the instant he passes, but by the time he is within twenty yards of their post, so that they may be perfectly steady, before he comes up.

Corporals. Corporals marching with reliefs, or commanding detachments, or divisions, will carry their arms *advanced*, as at present; for which purpose a soldier when promoted to that rank, must be taught the position of *advanced arms*.

PLATOON EXERCISE.

*Explanation of the several Motions,
as taught at the drill.*

EXPLANATION.

Words of
command.

AS usual, bringing the firelock to the
recover, and instantly cocking.

1st. *Make
ready.*

1st. Slip the left hand along the sling
as far as the swell of the firelock, and bring
the piece down to the *present*, stepping
back about six inches to the rear with
the right foot.

2d. *Pre-
sent.*

After firing drop the firelock briskly
to the *priming* position.

3d. *Fire.*

2d. Half cock.

1st. Draw the cartridge from the
pouch.

4th. *Han-
dle cart-
ridge.*

2d. Bring it to the mouth, holding it
between the fore-finger and thumb, and
bite off the top of it.

1st. Shake

5th. Prime. 1st. Shake some powder into the pan.
 2d. Shut the pan with the three last fingers.
 3d. Seize the small of the butt with the above three fingers.

6th. Load. 1st. Face to the left on both heels, so that the right toe may point directly to the front, and the body be a very little faced to the left, bringing at the same time the firelock round to the left side without sinking it. It should, in this momentary position, be almost perpendicular (having the muzzle only a small degree brought forward), and as soon as it is steady there, it must instantly be forced down within 2 inches of the ground, the butt nearly opposite the left heel, and the firelock itself somewhat sloped, and directly to the front; the right hand at the same instant catches the muzzle, in order to steady it.

2d. Shake the powder into the barrel, putting in after it the paper and ball.

3d. Seize the top of the ramrod, with the forefinger and thumb.

7th. Draw ramrods. 1st. Force the ramrod half out, and seize it backhanded exactly in the middle.

2d. Draw it entirely out, and turning it with the whole hand and arm extended from you, put it one inch into the barrel.

1st. Push

1st. Push the ramrod down, holding *Ram*
it as before exactly in the middle, 'till *down cart-*
the hand touches the muzzle. *ridge.*

2d. Slip the fore finger and thumb
to the upper end, without letting the
ramrod fall further into the barrel.

3d. Push the cartridge well down to
the bottom.

4th. Strike it two very quick strokes
with the ramrod.

1st. Draw the ramrod half out, catch- *9th. Re-*
ing it backhanded. *turn ram-*

2d. Draw it entirely out, turning it *rods.*
very briskly from you with the arm ex-
tended, and put it into the loops, forc-
ing it as quick as possible to the
bottom; then face to the proper front,
the finger and thumb of the right hand
holding the ramrod, as in the position
immediately previous to drawing it, and
the butt raised two inches from the
ground.

Strike the top of the muzzle smartly *10th.*
with the right hand, in order to fix the *Shoulder*
bayonet, and ramrod, more firmly, and *arms.*
at the same time throw it nimbly up, at
one motion, to the shoulder.

N.B. Though the butts are not to come
to the ground in casting about, as accidents
may happen from it, yet they are per-
mitted,

mitted, while loading, to be so rested ; but it must be done without noise, and in a manner imperceptible in the front.

EXPLANATION OF PRIMING AND LOADING QUICK.

Words of
command.

Prime and
load.

1st. Bring the firelock down in one brisk motion to the priming position, the thumb of the right hand placed against the pan cover, or steel; the fingers clenched; and the elbow a little turned out, so that the wrist may be clear of the cock.

2d. Open the pan, by throwing up the steel, with a strong motion of the right arm, turning the elbow in, and keeping the firelock steady in the left hand.

3d. Bring your hand round to the pouch, and draw out the cartridge.

The rest as above described, excepting that, in the quick loading, all the motions are to be done with as much dispatch

dispatch as possible; the soldiers taking their time, from the flugel man in front, for *casting over, and shouldering only.*

In firing three deep, the priming *Priming* position for the front rank is the height *position.* of the waistband of the breeches: for the center rank, about the middle of the stomach: and for the rear rank, close to the breast: the firelock, in all these positions, is to be kept perfectly horizontal.

EXPLANATION OF THE POSITION OF EACH RANK IN THE FIRINGS.

Front rank, kneeling.

Bring the firelock briskly up, to the *Make* *recover,* catching it in the left hand; *ready.* and, without stopping, sink down with a quick motion upon the right knee, keeping the left foot fast, the butt end of the firelock, at the same moment, falling upon the ground; then cock, and instantly seize the cock and steel together in the right hand, holding the piece firm

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in

in the left, about the middle of that part which is between the lock and the swell of the stock : the point of the left thumb, to be close to the swell and pointing upwards.

As the body is sinking, the right knee is to be thrown so far back, that the left leg may be right up and down, the right foot a little turned out, the body straight, and the head as much up, as if shouldered; the firelock must be upright, and the butt about four inches to the right of the inside of the left foot.

Present.

Bring the firelock down firmly to the *present*, by sliding the left hand, to the full extent of the arm, along the sling, without letting the motion tell;—the right hand at the same time springing up the butt by the cock so high against the right shoulder, that the head may not be too much lowered in taking aim; the right cheek to be close to the butt; the left eye shut, and the middle finger of the right hand on the trigger, look along the barrel with the right eye from the breech pin to the muzzle, and remain steady.

Pull the trigger strong with the middle finger, and as soon as fired, spring
up

up nimbly upon the left leg, keeping the *Fire.*
 body erect and the left foot fast, and
 bringing the right heel to the hollow of
 the left; at the same instant drop the
 firelock to the priming position the
 height of the waistband of the breeches;
half cock; handle cartridge, and go on
 with the loading motions, as before
 described.

Center Rank.

Spring the firelock briskly to the *re-Make*
cover; as soon as the left hand seizes the *ready.*
 firelock above the lock, raise the right
 elbow a little, placing the thumb of that
 hand upon the cock, with the fingers
 open on the plate of the lock, and then,
 as quick as possible, cock the piece, by
 dropping the elbow, and forcing down
 the cock with the thumb, step at
 the same time with the right foot a
 moderate pace to the right, and keeping
 the left fast, seize the small of the butt,
 with the right hand: The piece must
 be held in this position perpendicular,
 and opposite the left side of the face, the

butt close to the breast, but not pressed, the body straight, and full to the front, and the head erect.

Present.

As in the foregoing explanation for the front rank.

Fire.

Pull the trigger strong with the middle finger, and, as soon as fired, bring the firelock to the priming position, about the height of the stomach; the rest, as in explanation of *priming* and *loading*—with this difference only, that the left foot is to be drawn up to the right, at the same time that the firelock is brought down to the priming position; and that, immediately after the firelock is thrown up to the shoulder, the men spring to the left again, and cover their file leaders.

Rear Rank.

*Make
ready.*

Recover and cock, as before directed for the centre rank, and as the firelock is brought to the recover, step briskly to the right a full pace, at the same time placing the left heel about six inches before the point of the right foot.—The body to be kept straight, and as square to the front as possible.

As

As in explanation for the center rank. *Present.*

As in explanation for the center rank, *Fire.*
remembering only the difference of the priming position for this rank, as before described ; after firing, and shouldering, the men step, as the center rank does.

In firing with the front rank *standing*, that rank makes ready, &c. as specified in the article relative to the *platoon exercise.*

N. B. In giving words of command, *Officers.*
as well in as out of the ranks, officers are to stand perfectly steady, and in their proper position ; their swords held firmly in the full of the right hand, with the upper part of the blade resting against the shoulder, the right wrist against the hip, and the elbow drawn back.

Firing by Platoons.

The officers, instead of giving the words, *platoon, make ready, present, &c. Officers,*
fire, are to pronounce the words short, as for instance, *toon, ready, psent, fire.*

In firing by platoons, or divisions, the officers commanding them are to step out one pace, on the close of the *preparative*, and face to the left towards their

men: They there stand perfectly steady till the last part of the *general*, when they step back again into their proper intervals, all at the same time.—After a division has fired, the right-hand man of it steps out one pace, in front of the officer, but still keeping his own proper front, and gives the time for *casting about*, and *shouldering*, after which he falls back again into his place in the front rank.

The flugel man of a battalion, is also to keep his front, in giving the time of exercise.

In firing by grand divisions, the center officer falls back, on the *preparative*, into the fourth rank, and is replaced by the covering serjeant.

F I N I S.

